

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) manages 264 million acres of public lands -- about one-eighth of the land area of the United States -- and approximately 300 million additional acres of subsurface mineral estate. Altogether, the BLM manages 41 percent of the public land acreage managed by the Federal government, putting the Bureau in a unique position to manage and protect our Nation's priceless natural and cultural heritage.

The Bureau of Land Management's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

The lands administered by the BLM are some of the most ecologically and culturally diverse and scientifically important lands in Federal ownership. The Bureau is responsible for protecting and preserving paleontological localities and archaeological and historical sites, including museum collections derived from those areas; wild free-roaming horses and burros; wilderness and wilderness study areas; wild and scenic rivers; rare, vulnerable, and representative habitats, plant communities, and ecosystems; the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument; areas of critical environmental concern; and other outstanding natural and cultural areas.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

The Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, created by Presidential Proclamation on September 18, 1996, is a dramatic, multi-hued landscape that is rich in natural and human history. Extending across 1.7 million acres of Utah public lands managed by the BLM, the Monument represents a unique combination of archeological, historical, paleontological, geological, and biological resources. The Bureau is working closely with State and local government officials and citizens to protect the land while allowing, within the proper conservation context, a number of traditional uses that will help keep people on the land and preserve our Western heritage.

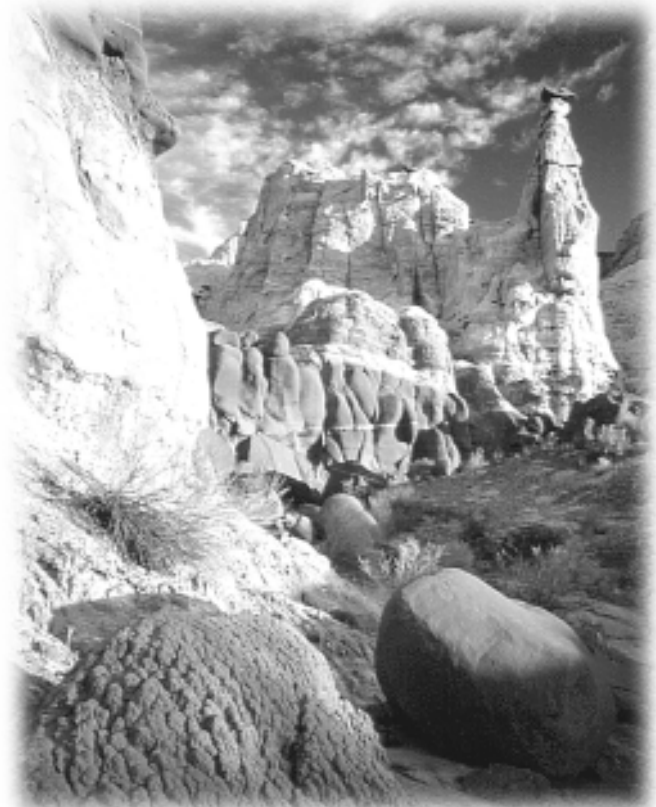
BLM Mission

"To sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation's public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

Providing Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Recreation

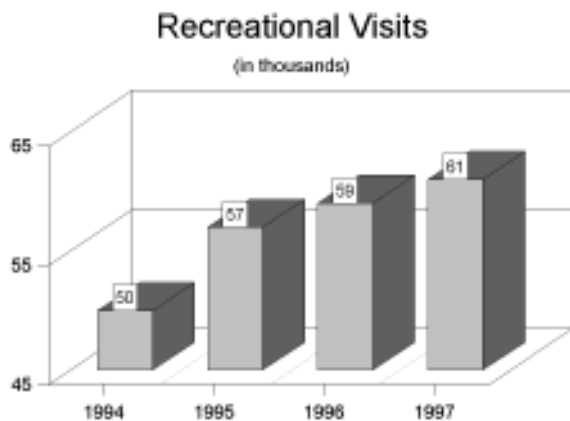
Studies indicate that 94.5 percent of the United States population participates in some form of outdoor recreation. These studies also reveal that the demand for recreation will continue to expand as the population increases. Visitation to BLM public lands in 1997 was 61 million visits, resulting in nearly 72 million visitor days of recreation use.

The BLM public lands provide visitors with a vast array of recreational opportunities. These include hunting, fishing, camping, hiking, boating, hang gliding, off-



Hoodoos near the Paria River in BLM's Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (photo by Ray Mathis).

Figure 2



highway vehicle driving, mountain biking, birding, and visiting natural and cultural heritage sites.

The BLM administers 205,498 miles of fishable streams, 2.2 million acres of lakes and reservoirs, 6,600 miles of floatable rivers, over 500 boating access points, 69 National Back Country Byways, and 300 Watchable Wildlife sites. The BLM also manages 4,500 miles of National Scenic, Historic, and Recreational Trails, as well as thousands of miles of multiple use trails used by motorcyclists, hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers.

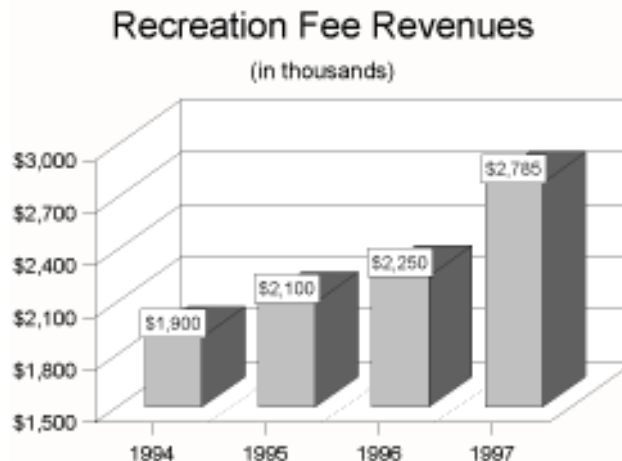
Preserving Our Natural Heritage

A total of 696 Areas of Critical Environmental Concern totaling almost 10.4 million acres have been designated nationwide on the public lands to protect important historical, cultural, scenic and natural areas or to identify areas where hazards to human life and property exist. About 7 million of these acres have been designated to protect biological resource values.

In addition, the BLM continued its stewardship of 136 Congressionally designated wilderness areas (5.3 million acres) and its management of 622 wilderness study areas (18 million acres).

The Bureau also continued to manage 34 Wild and Scenic River segments totaling 2,022 miles, including 392 miles of the Fortymile River in Alaska, the longest designated river in the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

Figure 3



Finally, the BLM exercised stewardship responsibilities for eight National Conservation Areas (11.7 million acres), one National Scenic Area (65,000 acres), one National Recreation Area (1 million acres), 43 National Natural Landmarks (600,000 acres), 100 Research Natural Areas (326,000 acres), and two Globally Important Bird Areas (56,500 acres).

Preserving Our Cultural Heritage

The BLM is steward for the Federal government's largest, most varied, and scientifically most important body of archaeological and historical resources -- an estimated 4 to 4.5 million cultural properties. These range in age, encompassing various early human occupation sites such as the 11,700-year-old Mesa Site in the Brooks Range; the comparably old Mill Iron and Lehner sites in Montana and Arizona, respectively; and the prehistoric Anasazi complex of the southwestern United States. Also represented are the remains of Spanish period exploration and settlement; the traces of buffalo soldiers at western forts; and the more recent historic sites documenting westward migration and the histories of ranching, railroading, homesteading, and even military maneuvers in anticipation of and preparation for World War II.

In fiscal year 1997, the Bureau inventoried 623,170 acres for cultural resources, recorded 9,939 properties, and issued or had in effect 448 study or management permits (excluding permits for paleontological collecting). To date, the Bureau has inventoried a total of 12.9 million acres and recorded 212,342 cultural resource properties. Of these, 241 are listed on the

National Register of Historic Places, with 22 listed as National Historic Landmarks.

Providing Opportunities for Environmentally Responsible Commercial Activities

The public lands provide myriad opportunities for commercial activities. Commercially valuable natural resources include energy and mineral commodities, forest products, grazing forage, and special uses such as rights-of-way for pipelines and transmission lines.

The public lands produce 33 percent of the Nation's coal, 8 percent of its natural gas, and 5 percent of its oil. These lands also produce a large portion of the Nation's fertilizer minerals, mineral materials, gold, silver, and other metals. In addition to overseeing activities on the Nation's public lands, the BLM provides technical supervision of mineral development on Indian lands.

Of the total of \$1.4 billion in annual revenues derived from BLM-managed lands, energy and minerals generated over \$1.3 billion from mineral royalties, rents, bonuses, sales, and fees. Energy and minerals also generated 98 percent of the total \$12.4 billion of production value from BLM-managed public lands. The total direct and indirect economic output impact of the mineral production value amounted to \$26.6 billion out of the \$27.5 billion total in commercial activities on public lands administered by the Bureau.

Currently, BLM administers about 46,000 oil and gas leases, of which 19,650 are producing or producible leases. During fiscal year 1997, the Bureau processed 2,795 oil and gas applications for permit to drill. As of the end of fiscal year 1997, BLM administered 370 coal leases, of which 123 leases were producing.

The BLM also administers over 77,600 rights-of-way grants for electrical transmission lines, communication sites, oil and gas pipelines, and other facilities nationwide and, at the end of fiscal 1997, was processing 6,148 right-of-way actions.

The BLM authorizes livestock grazing for more than 17,000 operators on about 164 million acres of public land in 16 Western States, providing nearly 9.8 million animal unit months of grazing. A total of 88 percent of the cattle produced in Idaho, 64 percent of the cattle in



As Devil's Gate rock formation looms in the background, modern-day pioneers form a wagon train in celebration of the Oregon National Historic Trail's sequicentennial anniversary (photo by BLM).

Wyoming, and 63 percent of the cattle in Arizona graze at least part of the year on public rangelands.

Conserving and Recovering Threatened and Endangered Plants and Animals

The public lands encompass unique and unusual natural areas that provide habitat for more than 8,000 native fish, wildlife, and plant species. Many of these special habitat areas are critical for the protection and recovery of more than 350 plant and animal species that are either listed or candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act. The BLM manages these areas in cooperation with State Fish and Wildlife agencies that are responsible for managing animal populations.

Reducing Threats to Public Health, Safety, and Property

The Bureau suppressed 2,046 wildland fires on BLM lands that burned a total of 1,037,144 acres and helped suppress an additional 624 fires on 468,788 acres of non-BLM lands. Overall, 80 percent of these fires were controlled at 10 acres or less and 90 percent were controlled at 100 acres or less.

This past year, the BLM carried out 162 hazardous material removal actions (short-term, rapid responses to hazardous substance releases) and conducted 11 remedial actions (longer-term responses leading to a permanent remedy). Among these was the cleanup of the Monite Explosives site in Sparks, Nevada; several thousand cubic yards of soil contaminated with TNT

and DNT were removed to hazardous waste disposal facilities. This is the largest cleanup that the Bureau has ever conducted.

The Bureau also:

- Initiated 7,613 investigations and enforcement actions and reinvigorated drug suppression effort on public lands, which resulted in the eradication and seizure of 159,024 marijuana plants and other drugs valued at over \$350 million.
- Identified over 3,100 safety hazards at abandoned mines, abated 868 priority safety hazards, and mitigated environmental hazards at 21 priority locations through partnerships with States and other stakeholders.
- Maintained 1,515 buildings and 1,140 recreation sites, maintained or improved 8,900 miles of roads and 4,400 miles of trails, and inspected 135 bridges.

Improving Land, Resource, and Title Information

The BLM has extensive current and historical information about land ownership, use, and condition in the United States. The agency maintains cadastral survey and historical data on lands patented, along with information on the mineral estate, resource conditions, and permits or leases on Federal lands.

The BLM is also responsible for providing customers with efficient and effective means to retrieve and use this information. Historical records are critical to resolving many ownership disputes and are increasingly recognized as an important source of both genealogical information and data about historic resource conditions in the United States.

National Historic Trails

"... husband traded two yoke of oxen for a half section of land with one-half planted to potatoes and a small log cabin and lean-to with no windows. This is the journey's end."

Amelia Stewart Knight, 1853

For Amelia Stewart Knight and her family, and for countless others who went before or came after, journeys across the Nation by wagon train were bridges from one life to another. The stories told by these journeys--stories of how natives and newcomers alike struggled to accommodate themselves to the land and to each other--form the history of the United States. It is a story that can be read by all Americans in the rich tapestry woven by our National Historic Trails.

The BLM is America's principal on-the-ground steward of these fragile and nonrenewable resources, resources that are of national and, in some cases, international significance. Guided by the goals of the National Trails System Act to promote the protection and public enjoyment of the National Trails, BLM manages nearly 3,600 miles along nine National Historic Trails, plus nearly 1,000 additional miles along two National Scenic Trails and 26 National Recreation Trails.

The National Historic Trails pose unique management challenges. These linear and narrow corridors, thousands of miles long, cross numerous agency and State jurisdictions. The remote and sparsely populated lands along the trails also include vast expanses of private holdings. In addition to the challenge of developing and implementing multi-jurisdictional approaches to managing the trails, everyday activities such as mineral development, fire suppression, and wildlife management are just a few of the other activities that can impact the trails.

The increasing public demands for access to and enjoyment of the trails can be equally challenging for trail managers. And some trails, such as the Iditarod National Historic Trail in Alaska, remain the only available means of travel and communication between remote settlements on frontiers that are as real today as they were a century or more ago.

This past year, the Bureau continued to implement the Automated Land and Mineral Record System (ALMRS), with a total of 5,854 workstations now installed Bureauwide. General Land Office (GLO) land title records automated now total 1,835,000. The BLM also accomplished all of the actions required by the 1996 Freedom of Information Act Amendments by the target date; the public can now search electronically for records and can even electronically file requests for information directly with BLM offices.

Providing Economic and Technical Assistance

BLM-managed public lands generate substantial revenue from multiple use activities, much of which is returned in direct payments to the States and counties of origin. These payments are distributed to local gov-

ernments to pay for such things as schools, roads, and employee salaries.

Each year, the Bureau calculates and sends the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) to counties. These payments are intended to offset property tax shortfalls (under a Congressional formula) occurring in counties with public land holdings. In 1997, a total of \$113.1 million in PILT payments were made.

Restoring and Maintaining the Health of the Land

Working with others to restore and maintain the health of the land is the foundation for everything the BLM does. Livestock grazing, timber harvesting, hunting, fishing, and other resource uses can be sustained over time only if the land is healthy.

During 1997, standards for land health were approved for all of BLM's rangeland acreage. This was done in concert with the Healthy Rangelands Initiative supported by the Secretary of the Interior. Standards have also been incorporated into land use plans in the Pacific Northwest Forest Area.

Successful development and application of health standards depends upon general agreement and acceptance by all affected interests. To help accomplish this, the Secretary of the Interior has established Resource Advisory Councils. These Councils have been carefully structured to represent the wide array of diverse views and ideas in each region. There are 24 Resource Advisory Councils advising BLM's State Directors.

Fossils from America's Public Lands

The public lands managed by the BLM have served as our Nation's greatest outdoor laboratory and classroom for investigating the fascinating history of life on earth. Fossils from America's public lands have contributed significantly to scientific research and public education projects. Many of the earliest described and most widely known dinosaurs, such as Apatosaurus, Stegosaurus, and Allosaurus, came from the public lands. Starting in the mid-1800s, professional and amateur paleontologists have made discoveries that helped to launch the new scientific discipline of paleontology, and have filled America's new museums of Natural History with the remains of spectacular creatures that have captured the public's imagination.

Today, the public lands continue to provide paleontological resources that fuel scientific discovery and evoke public wonder. Guided by such laws as the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, the BLM manages these fragile and nonrenewable resources in the public trust not only to assure preservation of their scientific values, but also to see that their public educational and recreational values are realized.

While the BLM takes paleontological resources into account on all public lands, over 50 specially designated areas, such as Research Natural Areas, Areas of Critical Environmental Concern, and National Natural Landmarks, totaling nearly 300,000 acres, are managed wholly or in part for their outstanding paleontological values. Permits issued specifically for the collection of fossil vertebrates not only help advance scientific research, but also serve as an invaluable tool for communication between researchers and the BLM, which enhances the Bureau's ability to fulfill its public trust role as America's principle steward of this fragile and nonrenewable legacy. By working in partnership with the research community, the BLM also helps to assure that collections from the public lands are properly curated so that the information they contain is preserved.

Fossils from the public lands and the information they contain contribute to outstanding public exhibits such as the Denver Museum of Natural History's "Prehistoric Journey", Montana's Museum of the Rockies exhibits of carnivorous dinosaurs, and blockbuster movies such as "Jurassic Park" and "The Lost World." The BLM manages a number of publicly accessible and interpreted paleontological sites such as the Cleveland-Lloyd Dinosaur Quarry, the Trilobite Trail, and the Trail Through Time. And, to meet public demands for recreational opportunities, the Bureau makes most public lands available for collecting invertebrate fossils and limited amounts of petrified wood.

During fiscal year 1997, the BLM worked together with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to determine how well the National Resources Inventory, conducted by that agency periodically on private lands for the past several decades, might be adapted for assessing and tracking the health of rangelands. The test effort was conducted on 7 million acres of BLM-managed rangelands in Colorado. The test results are not yet complete; analysis of these results and the lessons learned will take place during 1998.

The BLM is also participating in a number of other interagency and intergovernmental assessments of ecological condition, trend, and function. Examples include the Eastside and Upper Columbia River Basin assessments, primarily in Oregon and Idaho, and the

Henry's Fork assessment in Idaho and Wyoming. These assessments are crucial to improving BLM's understanding of natural and human sources of ecosystem stress. They also help identify areas that warrant restoration and maintenance activities.

Promoting Collaborative Management

Natural resource agencies are becoming increasingly aware of the complexities involved in public land management and the effects land use decisions have on others. Land ownership patterns in the West are fragmented. Public lands are intermingled with lands owned and managed by many others. As a result, watersheds, plant and animal populations, and human uses frequently cross jurisdictional boundaries.

The BLM is committed to managing the land and its resources for the good of both the environment and the people who rely on resources from public lands. But the BLM is acutely aware that it cannot accomplish this in a vacuum. The Bureau's land use decisions affect adjacent landowners and State, local, and Tribal governments, as well as BLM public lands themselves. Given these realities, the BLM is dedicated to understanding socioeconomic and environmental trends, being more inclusive in its decision-making, and implementing appropriate on-the-ground activities.

In fiscal year 1997, the BLM, in collaboration with its science partners, supported and participated in 56 research projects dealing with rangeland ecosystem function and restoration, weed management, riparian improvements, minerals, threatened and endangered plant and animal species, forest ecosystem restoration, wild horse fertility and genetics, and wildfire control. The Bureau also approved six Resource Management Plans (RMPs), along with their integrated Environmental Impact Statements (EISs).

Implementing the Government Performance and Results Act

The BLM is working to chart a new course for the next century. The Chief Financial Officers Act, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), the National Performance Review, and other initiatives all require Federal agencies to be accountable for performance and results.

During this fiscal year, the Bureau issued its first Strategic Plan under GPRA and is making strides on the measurement and evaluation components required by the Act. The Plan outlines the mission-oriented goals and objectives for the agency over the next 3-5 years, building on BLM's *Blueprint for the Future* and the following five overarching goals for the agency:

- Serve current and future publics.
- Restore and maintain the health of the land.
- Promote collaborative management.
- Improve business practices.
- Improve human resources management.

The BLM does not view its Strategic Plan as "just another paperwork exercise"; in fact, it already permeates day-to-day activities. Resource allocations (i.e., which programs and offices get funding) and daily operational decisions are starting to be linked to the Strategic Plan through a required Annual Performance Plan that will be transmitted to Congress.

Customer Service

The BLM is responsible for providing cost-efficient, quality customer service. This is in keeping with initiatives such as the National Performance Review, which requires all Federal agencies to take a customer-oriented approach to work processes and results.

Customer research is being conducted to help find out what is really important to its customers and partners -- to recreation users, livestock operators, local government officials, and others -- and to identify any barriers its own employees might face in serving customers in the field. This research will help the agency understand where it is now and what it needs to do to improve customer service and measure the results.

Good customer survey data at both the national and local levels is critical to strategic planning, performance measurement, and the evaluation of results required by the GPRA. Progress was made in fiscal year 1997 to establish baseline data on customer satisfaction and to ensure the consistent gathering and use of customer research information.

One way to improve customer service is by working across jurisdictional lines with other Federal, State, Tribal, and local agencies to develop more efficient ways of serving customers and increasing customer



Bluebird boxes being built with volunteer assistance on National Public Lands Day in Virginia (photo by BLM).

satisfaction. Collocation is one tool for accomplishing this.

A good example of collocation efforts is the “Trading Post” initiatives being undertaken jointly with the U.S. Forest Service in Colorado and Oregon, in which the BLM and Forest Service share common offices and staff responsibilities. These provide “one-stop” service and have greatly improved service to customers at the local BLM District and Forest level.

The BLM conducted three customer surveys in fiscal year 1997:

- *State and Local Government Customer Survey:* Based on a random nationwide telephone survey of 821 individuals and organizations conducted in August and September 1997, 51 percent of state and local governments are satisfied with the BLM. Just

under half of the respondents were from State governments, while 30 percent were from county governments.

- *Stakeholder and Partner Customer Survey:* Based on a random nationwide telephone survey of 904 individuals and organizations conducted in August and September 1997, 46 percent of the BLM’s stakeholders and partners are satisfied with BLM’s performance.
- *Wild Horse and Burro Adopters Customer Survey:* Based on a random nationwide telephone survey of 1,201 wild horse and burro adopters conducted in August and September 1997, 89 percent of the BLM’s wild horse and burro adopters are satisfied with BLM’s performance, while 70 percent are satisfied with the animal they adopted.